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The interleukin (IL)-2 receptor gamma chain has recently been shown to be a component of the IL-7 and IL-4 receptors. Using a transient transfection assay and the trans-activation of reporter gene constructs which are under the control of cytokine-responsive promoter elements, we have studied signal transduction through the IL-7 receptor (IL-7R). The reporter gene expression was not stimulated by receptors that contained the cytoplasmic domain of the IL-7R, either as intact IL-7R or as part of a chimeric receptor. However, co-expression of the IL-7R with the IL-2 receptor gamma chain was able to stimulate gene activation. For maximal stimulation the intact cytoplasmic domains of each chain was required.

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